Womanhood implies travel

Womanhood implies travel: Punjabi marriage migration between India and Britain

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Introduction

Writing about Punjabi women in Britain, Hannah Bradby (2000) remarks that 'womanhood implies travel' (p.236). Migration has long been central to marriage in Indian Punjab, which is almost universal among adult women, patrilocal and – for the Sikh and Hindu majority of the state – based on village and clan exogamy. Meanwhile, in Britain, marriage has been central to the establishment of Punjabi communities ever since the 1960s, and continues to engender movements not only for migrant brides from Punjab but also, for British-born Punjabi women. This chapter explores women's narratives of marriage-related mobilities in the context of both internal and international migration, thinking about the relationship between gender and the scale of migration and critiquing the hierarchy of mobilities too often found in the migration literature.

Ernst Georg Ravenstein (1885), often credited as the first migration theorist, asserted that 'woman is a greater migrant than man; this may surprise those who associate women with domestic life' (p.196). The United Kingdom census figures he used showed that women were more migratory than men over short distances, and that they migrated not only to seek work in domestic service but also, almost as frequently, to manufacturing jobs and thus, 'the workshop is a formidable rival of the kitchen and scullery' (*ibid.*). Men, on the other hand, were more likely than women to leave the country of their birth for one of the other kingdoms. It was the latter finding that really captured Ravenstein's attention. As Rachel Silvey (2006) observes, Ravenstein's laws of migration established some enduring assumptions about 'which scales of mobility… most matter', and 'the daily forms of mobility that made up the majority of women's mobility did not count in his definition of migration' (p.67). According to Donato et al. (2006), few subsequent scholars took any interest in Ravenstein's gendered laws of migration. In the 1920s, Willcox and Ferenczi (1929) compiled a vast survey of international migration statistics and noted variations in gender ratios at a time when international migration was heavily male-dominated, as Ravenstein predicted; but they did not seek to explain them. The rapid midcentury 'feminization of international migration', in stark violation of Ravenstein's theories, was also of little interest until the 1980s, when feminist scholars began to re-frame migration not only as a process in which women also participated – the 'add women and stir' approach – but as a process that is inherently structured by gender relations (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford 2006).

Ravenstein used migration as a synonym for labour migration, and some contemporary scholars still consider women's marriage-related mobilities to be a troublesome confounder of migration statistics and preferably removed. For example, Ravi Srivastava (2012) observes that of the 309 million internal migrants documented in India's 2001 census, 71% were women (p.4). The Indian data show the same relationship between scale and gender that Ravenstein saw in the UK for the late nineteenth century, namely that men dominate in inter-state and inter-district migration whilst women dominate in migration at the intra-district level (p.7). Srivastava observes that most migration among women is connected to marriage, which 92% of rural migrant women and 61% of urban women give as their stated reason for migration (*ibid.*). He proceeds to then try and remove marriage migration from the data so as to give a more properly economic picture, observing that 'the overwhelming preponderance of marriage-related

migration skews results on trends and patterns in certain directions. Excluding marriage-related migration, internal migration in India is comparatively more employment oriented, male-oriented and long distance' (*ibid.*, and see Agnihotri et al. 2012 for a critique). Like Ravenstein more than a century earlier, gendered assumptions are being made here about the scales of mobility that matter, and key forms of women's mobility are being discounted.

In contrast, this chapter focuses explicitly on women's experiences of marriage-related mobilities. Moreover, we treat international and internal migration within the same frame. The context is the half-million strong population of Punjabi Sikhs in Britain, the largest ethno-religious community among the 1.4 million Indians living in the country (RHLCID 2001; Office for National Statistics 2012). Britain's extensive demographic connections with the Indian subcontinent are the result of the tracks laid down by colonial migration and post-colonial Commonwealth migration from the post-war era. The colonial era saw the transient migration of Indian princes, students and soldiers to Britain (Singh and Tatla 2006, p.46-7). In the inter-war years came the first waves permanent settlement, predominantly from two communities of Punjabi Sikhs: members of the Bhatra peddler caste originating in Sialkot in West Punjab, who settled in the port cities of Wales, northern England and Scotland, and members the Jat small-holder/cultivator caste originating in the Jalandhar Doaba, who settled in the north of England, Scotland, and in the industrial towns of the Midlands (*ibid*., p.48-9). These migration flows were constituted largely by single men, and hugely reinforced in the 1950s during the era of post-war reconstruction in which the needs of Britain's expanding economy coincided with a political imperative to an open nationality and citizenship regime so as to allow Britain to maintain its imperial status among the countries of the Commonwealth. During the 1950s, tens of thousands of Indian men migrated to Britain every year seeking work, and chief among these immigration streams was the deepening channel from Punjab's Jalandhar Doaba (*ibid.*, p.50-2). Following racialized tensions over Commonwealth immigration in the late 1950s, limits were placed on primary labour migration in the early 1960s, after which family reunification became the primary channel for onward immigration to Britain (*ibid.*, p.53-5). Following Enoch Powell's notorious 'rivers of blood' speech in 1968, and the rise of the Far Right National Front in the 1970s, the UK government implemented further restrictions on the ability of migrants to settle in Britain. The British Nationality Act of 1981, responding to the arrival of East African Asians fleeing Uganda and Kenya under the Africanization policies of the 1970s, created three categories of citizen – British, dependent territories and overseas – so as to exclude the latter, most of whom were of South Asian origin, from the right to abode in Britain. Thereafter immigration controls were applied through the Primary Purpose Rule, which was intended to exclude brides or bridegrooms from South Asia whose main aim was seen as settlement in Britain (*ibid.* p.55, and see Menski 1999). Although the Primary Purpose Rule was abolished by Labour in 1997, the Conservative governments since 2010 have further restricted marriage migration from South Asia by imposing income requirements for sponsoring spouses (Bale and Hampshire 2012).

At 39% in 2008, spouses were still the largest single category of migrant settlement in Britain (Charsley et al. 2012, p.861), of which wives made up 60%, although the gender ratios varied between national groups (p.867). Neck-and-neck with Pakistan, India made up the largest number of grants of settlement for spousal migrants: the proportion of wives was 52% (p.869). For women, marriage remains a disproportionately important channel for entry to Britain, as the statistics indicate that 35% of British-born Indian men marry a wife from India whilst only 25%

of British-born Indian women marry a husband from India (Ersanilli and Charsley 2015, p.6). The Indian marriage migration stream is predominantly Sikh, as this community appears to marry in India more frequently than the other largest Indian-origin populations in Britain (Ballard 1990; Bradby 1999; Raj 2003; Charsley et al. 2016; Thandi 2013). Transnational marriage among Punjabi Sikhs reflects preferred patterns of familial arrangement and concerns about household socio-economic mobility through emigration (Mand 2003; Mooney 2006; Walton-Roberts 2004; Mooney 2011; Hastir 2016). By contrast, although the prevailing pattern is for marriages to take place between two Punjabi Sikhs born and raised in Britain, far less is known about internal marriage migration within Britain, except in as far as studies document that Punjabi Sikh marriages in Britain are still primarily patrilocal (Jhutti 1998; Mand 2003; Jhutti-Johal 2013; Charsley et al. 2016). We have previously pointed to the 'geographies of Punjabiness' that exist within Britain, connecting areas of dense Punjabi settlement – Bradford, Wolverhampton, Handsworth, Coventry, Leicester, East Ham, Southall, Ilford, Woolwich and Gravesend – through movements of chain migration (Qureshi 2014). Our studies suggest that the same geographical connections are shown in the streams of internal marriage migration.

As we have seen, international and internal migration have been set apart from one another in the migration studies literature, with international migration often given greater importance (see Rogaly 2015). However, 'translocalism' pushes against the methodological nationalism of migration studies, focusing on connections sustained across locales *irrespective of whether these cross national borders*, and revealing a plurality of spaces and scales in which migrants are emplaced (Datta 2013; Brickell and Datta 2011). A handful of studies of marriage migration have drawn out the commonalities between international and internal migration. Shruti Chaudhry (2016, 2017) documents the phenomenon of cross-regional marriages in India, undergirded by poverty in the bride-sending areas and masculine sex ratios in the bride-receiving regions, combined with the difficulties some rural men have in achieving eligibility for marriage. As these cross-regional marriages are commercially mediated, she observes parallels with forms of cross-border marriages such as 'mail-order brides' (cf. Constable 2005; Williams 2010). Yet there may also be differences in women's lived experience of marriage, as Chaudhry (2018) documents the greater isolation of cross-regionally marrying women in their marital homes and their lack of recourse to support from their natal kin. There are lessons to be drawn from a body of literature on marriage alliance patterns in the Indian subcontinent, which has identified how the greater distances over which marriages are arranged in the North as compared to the South 'tend to constrain or erode the personal links between a married woman and her natal kin' (Dyson and Moore 1983, p.46; and see Mandelbaum 1986; Karve 1993; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001). The absence of kinship support is found to diminish women's 'autonomy', impacting a range of demographic events (from their reproductive to their marital careers, see Unnithan-Kumar 2001; Mumtaz and Salway 2009; Grover 2011; Abraham 2008). Building on this literature, this chapter explores the parallels and differences in women's marriage-related international and internal migration, and considers what it is about migration that matters to the people who engage in it.

Research setting and methods

The chapter draws from 'Places for all?', a study based in the provincial English city of Peterborough between 2011-13 (see Rogaly 2016). Peterborough is a small city in the east of England which has a long history of inward migration, both from within Britain and from further

afield, due to the pull of its brickworks, engineering and food processing industries. It has recently been described as 'super-diverse' (Erel 2011). 'Places for all?' sought to explore the multiple place attachments and migration and work histories of people from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds, from people born in the city through to those who had only arrived very recently (Rogaly and Qureshi 2013). The project involved residential fieldwork and oral history interviews with over a hundred people. It sought to be both collaborative and transformational. Working with colleagues from the arts, we brought different Peterborough residents' oral histories into conversation with each other using theatre, photography, exhibitions and other events. These conversations included residents who were apparently unfamiliar with each other because of their differing ethnicities, countries of origin and migration histories. We were inspired by a methodological literature on oral history, which has moved over time from an initial positivist approach to an interpretivist one attentive to the shared authority between interviewer and narrator, co-production and the use of oral history to achieve social change (Perks and Thomson 2016). We hoped that oral history interviews could be transformative for the individual narrators. At a time when the figure of the migrant has been indexed in British public discourse as male, dark-skinned, Muslim and threatening, we hoped that the project could enable greater understanding of challenges that Peterborough residents face *in common* across ethnic and national boundaries, and thus build opposition to racism and anti-immigrant sentiment (Rogaly and Qureshi 2017; and see also Rogaly and Taylor 2009; 2010).

There is a significant presence of South Asian heritage people in Peterborough, which in in the 2011 census had a population comprising 2.5% 'Asian or Asian British Indian', 6.6% 'Asian or Asian British Pakistani' and 2% 'Asian or Asian British Other', the latter largely referring to the stream of South Asian-origin migrants who arrived in the city from East Africa as the result of expulsion from Uganda or Kenya under the Africanization policies of the 1970s (Office for National Statistics 2013). As both of us had previously done research in South Asia and in the South Asian diaspora, we were both keen to be involved in the interviews with Peterborough residents of South Asian heritage. We attended many interviews together and sustained relationships with the research participants long beyond the end of the project. This chapter draws on the life histories of just two of the 30 South Asian participants, two women who spoke to us in particularly rich detail in relation to marriage migration. The two women we discuss are of different generations and national backgrounds, and their interviews map out distinct lives and times, which we trace out in the analysis, but both have multiple place attachments.

Two life histories

Kirat

Kirat was 33 when Kaveri interviewed her. She lived the first 18 years of her life in India, migrating to Britain in 1996 following her marriage to Suki, a British Punjabi Sikh who was born and brought up in Peterborough. Kirat grew up in a village in Ludhiana district in Punjab, but she was born in rural Uttar Pradesh, as her mother had followed the custom of returning to her natal home for the delivery of her first child. Kirat's grandmother had moved to Uttar Pradesh after Kirat's mother's marriage. The price of land had rocketed in Punjab, but 'in U.P. there's more land and a good life and it was cheap'. Kirat's face lit up as she recalled idyllic holidays spent at her grandparents' farmhouse as a child, travelling by train with her mother and siblings, so that her mother could spend some time with her family.

> We used to go a lot [to my maternal grandparents' house] because we used to love going there, the thing we loved was that you go by train and we loved it, the all night journey.
> *Oh a sleeper?*
> Yeah... We used to love it, going together with my cousins and stuff like that so it was quite interesting. U.P. is different to Punjab, really, really different.
> *What things would strike you when you went there as a kid about the difference between Punjab and U.P.?*
> It's more open space there and they grow so many trees like mango trees, when I was little because I love mango, so we used to go in summer when it was season for mangoes. <Laughter>

Although Kirat's mother's family lived an eight-hour train journey from Ludhiana, they were an important presence in Kirat's life, perhaps more so than for many other Punjabi women because her father – who was in the Indian army until Kirat was 8 – was away from home at cantonments across the country. Then when she was 15 he died, tragically, of a sudden heart attack. Kirat father's death was not only emotionally devastating for Kirat and her family, but also catapulted them into hardship.

> I was good [at my studies] as in I wanted to learn. But when my dad passed away after that I didn't really concentrate on my study either, because I was really stressed and depressed as well. So everything changed after that.
> *Did you continue your studies after?*
> I did, after two years I did, I was going to college but I didn't do very good… I was the oldest in the house and I was more worried about things, how are we going to get food … and everything. I couldn't do much; I couldn't go out and work.

They survived only with financial help from Kirat's mother's family:

> My mum was on her own and in India she wasn't working so it was really hard for us. At one point our house, it was like… we had a nice house, but obviously when it used to rain it used to rain a lot so we had drips everywhere in our house; we couldn't change the roof because we didn't have any money, so it was that situation. But my mum's sisters and brothers, they helped my mum financially, everything, they did everything, otherwise we wouldn't be here now.

Kirat's father's death and the support of her mother's family were also crucial to the story she told of her marriage. Her marriage had been a cause for great concern as she was the eldest of five sisters – she did not have any brothers – and her mother had no husband or son on whose financial help she could rely. The prospect of a transnational marriage – relatively common in the region in the Jat caste to which she belongs (Mooney 2011) – was something that the family hoped could raise the household out of its times of hardship. But as Kirat related, when the first proposal of marriage arrived from Australia a year after her father's death she declined, because they did not have sufficient savings to pay for a wedding.

> I wasn't ready at that time, because my dad passed away and everything and it was too soon for us, financially as well because we needed our money to do a wedding and stuff, so I had to say, 'No I'm not ready.' Otherwise I would be in Australia <laughs>.

Kirat said that as a teenager, she had always hoped to marry in the West: she had been brought up to expect that she would move away from her family upon marriage, transnational marriages were common in the community from which she came, and she expected it could improve the situation of her family. The proposal from her husband Suki came three years after her father's death, when she was 19.

> I did it for my mum, because I was thinking 'This is a good opportunity' as well. I'm not being dishonest, I'm just saying that's how I thought about it because I knew I'm the oldest and if I go to England, if I work there I could help my mum out as well. And I did like my husband, all the family was really nice, I was really lucky, but if it was somebody, I don't know, if I didn't know anyone I still would say 'Yes', for my family, because I wanted to do something for them.

Kirat's maternal aunts and uncles paid for the wedding. Suki stayed in India for just two weeks after the wedding, after which, having exhausted his annual leave, he returned to Peterborough. It was six months before Kirat's spouse visa was approved and she was able to fly to Britain. During that time, she described struggling to connect with her husband. She was reluctant to speak to him on the phone and even during the two weeks when he was still in India, she was reserved in front of him and his family, intimidated by their fluent English. Although she had learnt some English through her schooling, she felt tongue-tied, different and inferior to them as a result of their upbringing and residence in the West.

> Sometimes mum used to make him call me, because obviously we didn't know each other that much and I was really shy. Now everything's different, I was saying, 'I could get married now,' <laughs> because, you know? <Laughter> It will be more like fun, but it was them days so. But it was alright. All his family went from here, his uncles, because they were all here so everybody was there at that time and I was like, 'Oh my god, all these people from England', you know? … I could I never could understand what they were saying.

Kirat's long-standing hopes of emigration didn't make it any easier to migrate to a far-off country. She remembered her first impressions of the place: 'it was cold <laughs>, really cold'. She did not talk about the newness of being surrounded by white people so much as her continued difficulty in expressing and asserting herself in the social milieu of British Punjabi Sikhs. Although she shared the ancestral language and ethnic identity, she felt a fish out of water with British-born Punjabi Sikhs, gravitating towards her mother-in-law's company as she could speak more freely with her in their mother tongue.

> I could understand everything but I couldn't say much because obviously I wasn't used to speaking English so we always used to speak Punjabi. So it was hard for me the first year/two years because I couldn't sit with my husband and my brother-in-law, my sister-in-law because obviously I was thinking I'm not part of them because I can't speak. So I

> used to spend more time with my mother-in-law because she always used to speak Punjabi.

It was within the context of her marital home that she described experiencing a kind of racism. His siblings 'used to take the mickey out of me sometimes, they used to say stuff'; Kirat's mother-in-law would 'stick up' for her and reprimand them. Despite the emotional support she described from her mother-in-law, Kirat missed her mother and sisters terribly in those early days. In her imagination she was not entirely living in Peterborough, her mind's eye constantly locked towards her family in India.

> At first it was really hard to leave my mum and my family and I mean, one of my younger sisters they used to ring me, 'Oh can we go on a school trip?' 'No you're not allowed to go on a school trip because if something happens, if a person has an accident…' they were like, 'Oh my god!'

Within six months, Kirat's mother-in-law by pushing her to go to English classes at an adult education college. As Kirat recalled, these classes were initially very difficult for her. They forced her out of the relative comfort of her Punjabi-speaking home and into the public domain of English. Again it was not so much the English she encountered through these classes, as the social milieu of other immigrant women.

> I think I came in April then I think I went [to college] in September because my [mother-in-law] really wanted me to study. Yeah I wasn't happy about it <chuckles> because I had to go out there… // The first year I went to college my husband didn't take me and it was a big college, I don't know English or anything, 'How am I going to find the room?' [My husband] wrote on a piece of paper and say, 'Can you tell me where this room is please?' So I read it and then asked someone there so they told me where the room was, otherwise I wouldn't know where to go. So that's how I found the room.
> The teachers were really nice. It was a good experience. There was people from different countries, not just from India… Some people were from Pakistan and some from I think… different countries; there was one Chinese girl, I got on really well with them so it was good.

Kirat reflected that her mother-in-law had done her a life-changing favour in making her go to those classes, acquiring skills that she herself had not had the privilege to enjoy. Learning English allowed Kirat develop confidence in conducting herself not only in public life in Peterborough, but also in her marriage.

> I think [my mother-in-law] did the right thing.
> *Why was she so keen for you to study, what did she say?*
> She just wanted me to learn and she was pushing me to do something… // She used to say, 'If you learn, speak English you're going to be like this lot [her husband and his siblings] one day.' That's what's happening now <chuckles>. So she's the one who pushed me really, and even though she couldn't read much when I used to come back from college she used to see what I've done there – she was interested to know what I was doing in college, what homework I got to do.

Subsequently, Kirat's mother-in-law encouraged her to apply for work. She found skilled work at a local children's centre. Again, Kirat recognized how this was her mother-in-law's vicarious ambition; 'she goes, "I'm working in a factory, I don't want you to work in a factory, I want you to have a good job."'. Earning money was important to what Kirat valued about her work. She sent much of her earnings to her mother in India, as she had her earlier savings from the housekeeping money that her in-laws gave her.

> I always wanted to work, because like I said I wanted to help my family as well… But when I came here I didn't work for a while, because I used to go to college. So my father-in-law, they used to give me money to spend but I never used to spend a single penny on me; I wore my sister-in-law's clothes, she wore them and then she'd say, 'I don't want them,' we still share things now. But then I used wear them clothes and save money for my mum, so that's how I did it. When I went to India the first time I had £1000 on me. I didn't tell anybody but I saved it and took it, I thought 'That's how I can help them', but then I started working, so. It was really hard.

Thanks to her thrift and hard work, Kirat had managed to re-build the house in which she had grown up in in Ludhiana and 'it's a beautiful house now'. She had also succeeded in finding a proposal for one of her younger sisters among the Punjabi Sikh community in Peterborough, becoming an 'agent of migration' (Mooney 2006, p.397) for her family. Another younger sister had married in Canada, and Kirat hoped that this sister would eventually be able to sponsor their mother's immigration to Canada too. Meanwhile, Kirat was still striving to enjoy the same visits to her natal family that her mother had enjoyed whilst they were children. The journey from Britain to Punjab was lengthier and more expensive than her mother's journeys from Ludhiana to Uttar Pradesh, but she had been back to India six times over the 15 years she had lived in Peterborough, and she reckoned she had managed to spend at least half of that precious time at her mother's house – absenting herself cautiously from her in-laws extended family in Ludhiana.

Satish

Satish, part of an earlier generation of migrants, was 65 when Kaveri interviewed her in 2011. She was not a marriage migrant but a child migrant from one of the earliest waves of immigration and settlement from Punjab to Britain, that of the Bhatra Sikhs (see Ghuman 1980; and Nesbitt 1981 on the early history of the Bhatra Sikh community). Satish was born in 1946 in Lahore, in what is now Pakistan, and migrated to Britain in 1948 in the devastating aftermath of the partition of India, following her paternal grandfather who immigrated in 1935 to sell clothes out of a suitcase. Her grandfather had prospered in this line of work, and Satish's father was able to purchase a house in Ely in Cambridgeshire upon his arrival in 1948. Within a year they had moved to East London, but Ely kept a special place in Satish's life history as it was there that her father had co-authored a book, in Punjabi, with the man who became her father-in-law – an old friend from Lahore. The book told of their heartbreak at the loss of their natal city of Lahore.

Satish lived in East London until she was 8. Her father imported silk scarves and other cloth from India and took them by train to Cardiff to sell. She remembered the big leather suitcases he used to carry. Subsequently the family moved to Cardiff, and later to Bristol, so as to facilitate his business. Satish described her childhood in glowing terms. Unlike Kirat, who was intimidated

by English-speaking company and by public life, Satish recalled acquiring a Cockney accent in East London and how she 'didn't feel an outsider at all' in Cardiff. She recalled her school days very warmly, and the feeling of closeness she enjoyed with her teachers was built into the story of her marriage, too. She married at 16. It was arranged; her father had engaged her to the son of his literary collaborator. At the time Satish had no personal knowledge of her to-be husband, but she trusted her parents' decisions for her.

> When I was about 14 I was told I was engaged. <Laughs> I actually remember two uncles coming and my father introducing me… I boiled a cup of tea for them… About a month later or two weeks later, they [my parents] said, 'You're engaged now.' It didn't play on my mind at all but the initial shock of it, I thought, 'Well how can I be engaged? What is engagement?...' All I knew is that… I had two sisters married, two brothers married and I was the next in line and all I knew was I was engaged. But when it did hit me I had to tell somebody and I told my teacher because I was very close to her and then she was astounded because she said, 'Do you not know the person?' And I said, 'No, Mrs Jones. Where is Peterborough?' Because we were in Wales and Peterborough was in England. I said, 'All right.' But then she said, 'Well if it's acceptable and you've got two sisters that are happy and two brothers that are happy [in arranged marriages], then you'll be fine, don't worry about anything.' <laughs> So she put my mind at rest, bless her.

Her teacher's apprehension aside, Satish said she felt very lucky in her parents' choice:

> The wedding came and I'd never actually seen my husband but mum said 'in India when we last saw him, he was beautiful and he was white, fair-skinned with really rosy cheeks and really well-bred ears and he was lovely looking'. So that was just a little thing, but what really hit me when I was even married in the veil, when I saw his face, my heart missed a beat! And I always say this to my children, my family, I always say, 'When I saw your dad, that was it, I thought *how lucky* I had been, how lucky.'

Satish moved from Bristol to Peterborough, a city she had never heard of, in those days a six hour drive away. It was a move into the unknown. Laughing, she described having nightmares about the move. It wasn't just the distance, but the prospect of going to live in an unknown, different family. Her father-in-law was said to keep chickens, but Satish had a horror of touching raw meat. Nonetheless, like Kirat, she had been brought up with the expectation that she would one day leave her natal family and go far away.

> *How did you feel about the idea of coming to Peterborough?*
> Oh, I had nightmares!
> *Why?*
> Why? Because first of all, one time somebody said, my father and my father-in-law had been communicating because they had had that scholarship together and then they were managers and editors of the magazines and then my father-in-law must have said, 'Oh we've bought a farm…' not a farm, acreage or something like that and kept chickens and things and I'm not a person like that because in our family [her in-laws' family], bless them, we had chickens, real chickens and we used to have them in the cellar and then they used to be killed the way that… the *jhatka* (a method of slaughtering in one blow),

> but I never touched the… I used to eat the meat when it was cooked and that gave me nightmares! <laughs> I thought, 'Oh dear, what am I going to do?'. But when I got married I don't know what happened… The words I can remember that as I was going in the car when they just take you after the marriage ceremony, my father said, 'Your husband's brothers, treat as your own brothers; and your husband's sisters are like your sisters, and your father-in-law and your mother-in-law is just like me and your mum.'

Satish returned several times in her interview to the advice her father had given her at the time of her parting at the wedding, remembering it as the only occasion when she had ever seen him cry. This advice was something she had tried to embody throughout her marriage. She had moved into a large extended family household with her parents-in-law, her husband's elder brother and his wife, and all of her husband's other siblings. Although the family was similar to her own, in other ways it was different. In a reverse of Kirat's inhibitions about speaking English, Satish found herself using much more Punjabi in her marital than in her natal home – something she regretted, as she had a love of the English language that came not only from her ease with it but also from the schooling she would have liked to continue;

> My mother-in-law bless them, didn't speak a lot of English at all. My sister-in-law didn't speak a lot of English, she could understand and she was broken English because she'd come over from India when she was 9. So that's the part that I was different; I had so much in me and I… and the other thing was I had a child in the first year and a child in the second year, so everything went out of the window! <laughs>

As this extract suggests, her account of the early years of her marriage was dominated by the five children who came quickly. It took two hours of narrating her life history for her to be able to speak openly about the difficulties of those early years living in a large extended family and in a fairly small house. There were many people's needs to juggle, her own children, those of her sisters-in-law and her sisters-in-law themselves and Satish described it as a situation ever prone to combustion. It was many years, years spent raising her five children, eventually moving out of the joint household and into a larger house, before she was able to return to education as a mature student, and then, begin work as a nursery assistant.

> I became my own person years after, *years* after. Then I did say to my husband that I would like to work and he said, 'Yes, you've got time on your hands, why don't you work then?'

She described adult education and employment as the achievement of her full potential, the fruition of deep-seated desires. But at the same time, she was careful to try to make us understand that she wasn't judging her earlier life negatively – the life where she was so 'entangled' with other people and their needs – as this was a way of life she had accepted, and how she continued to conduct herself.

> Now I've become what I really want in my life. I've achieved it but marriage and things I've been very, very fortunate but your own character can only come because we lived for in-laws, this, this, this… the whole status, a whole way of life we lived for and within each other… you're so entangled that you don't… It's not like nowadays everybody does

> what they want, when they want to do it, then you did it because it had to be done. And if you were happy you were fortunate! <laughs> So I was one of the fortunate ones because it didn't drag me down too much but it was a way of life that we accepted.

Satish told us she counted herself very lucky that her grown-up children were all living nearby and had not scattered as had happened to many other mothers she knew. Having said that, one of Satish's daughters had actually married and settled in Bristol. Satish had been introduced to her daughters' in-laws at an event at a temple in Bristol when she had been back visiting her parents. Satish now strived to give her daughter the same warm welcome that her mother had always given her when she returned to Bristol:

> I used to look at mum and think, 'I don't know how you did it really.' I really, really appreciated my mum because sometimes, once or twice, I used to say – you know when you get frustrated when you're a teenager and things? And… in my heart I knew I didn't understand my mum, but when I was married I thought, 'How did you do it mum? How do you give us such a welcome?' Golden teacups and when we went, mum used to keep this gold tea-set… and mum always used to say '*Ji aaya nu*' (welcome), always give us things and always give so much of herself. That's how… I don't think I'm 10% of what my mum was, but my mum was a magnificent person.

Satish covered a much a shorter distance in her marriage than Kirat's long-distance journey between Punjab and Britain, in spatial and in social terms. But in the same way that Kirat longed for her periodic returns to Punjab, Satish told us how she had longed for her twice-yearly returns to Bristol.

Concluding discussion

Kirat and Satish's life and times are very different, spanning different eras of international migration, different national backgrounds and different social locations in Britain. Kirat's life history allows us to appreciate the extent to which international marriage migration makes for great turbulence, the difficulty of getting used to a new country, language, culture and social milieu. Her status as a recent immigrant fixed her within a matrix of ethnic and racial difference and exposed her to structures of racism not only in the public domain but also, worked into family life in her marital home, as she described with her husband and his siblings' derision of her lack of fluency in English. Her life history also brings out her difficulties adjusting to domestic life in a new family that was geographically at a great distance from her natal home. Abraham (2008) notes the isolation experienced by Indian immigrant brides in the United States; 'in perception and in reality, a woman feels that she is emotionally and socially alone, economically constrained and culturally disconnected' (p.314). This is an apt way to describe the early days of Kirat's marriage. She struggled to develop intimacy with her husband, constrained by visa procedures to spend six months apart and on separate continents whilst her husband gathered the payslips he needed to sponsor her spousal migration, inhibited by the linguistic differences between them, her Indian upbringing put down by him and his siblings. Kirat countered her emotional and social aloneness by forging a good relationship with her mother-in-law, who pushed her out into the open and supported her to gain independence through education and skilled work. But other international marriage migrants are less fortunate. In other cases of women marriage migrants in our studies, the great distance between the two countries can make

it extremely difficult for women to access support from their natal families, with – in the event of marital conflict – divorce one result, and the forced sustaining of unhappy or even abusive marriages another (Qureshi 2016a, p.82-5,116-8); immigrant women may also be constrained by their in-laws from work, or expected to work but then to give their earnings to their husbands or in-laws (Qureshi 2016b, p.1221-5). Yet in other ways, the differences between Kirat and Satish's life stories seem to be differences of degree, the emotional and social isolation of the international marriage migrant blending into that of the cross-regionally marrying bride (Chaudhry 2016, 2017, 2018) or into that of the exogamously-marrying North Indian Hindu/Sikh woman compared to her South Indian or Muslim counterparts (Dyson and Moore 1983; Karve 1993; Mandelbaum 1986; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001). Satish's six hour journey from Bristol to Peterborough was daunting for her as was Kirat's journey from Punjab to Britain. Satish too longed for her natal family and struggled to assert herself in her marital home. The circular movements she made between her marital and her natal homes were similar, if more frequent and less costly, to those that Kirat had strived for in her marriage.

These life histories present a challenge to long-standing assumptions about the forms of migration that count, which as Silvey (2006) observes, have been based on a gendered hierarchy of scales 'in which "larger", "higher" scales, such as the national and international, were coded as masculine arenas, and "smaller" scales, such as the household and the body, were largely ignored and implicitly coded as female' (p.67). The life histories show how problematic it is to try to separate marriage migration from economic migration. Both women ended up finding great satisfaction in work, yet their movements were ostensibly about other things. Despite the differences in the experience of international and internal migration, they may share an emotional texture and moves over small distances can also be deeply felt. This is what we feel is so promising about the concept of 'translocalism' (Brickell and Datta 2011; Datta 2013). It offers us a way out of the pernicious indexing of the figure of the migrant to otherness, and allows us a way to appreciate the commonality and normalness of being attached to multiple places.

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